

many notes on the habits and nidification of the birds of these islands—which have, as far as we know, never been before investigated by a naturalist. We are not surprised at his meeting with species apparently undescribed. The Humming-bird, *Trochilus bahamensis*, does not, however, fall into that category, as it is certainly *Trochilus evelynæ* (Proc. Zool. Soc. 1847, p. 44), belonging to the genus or section *Thaumastura*. Had the tail of the male of this species really only *eight* feathers, as supposed by Dr. Bryant, we should consider it even more *wonderful* than is indicated by the generic name *Thaumastura*; for we do not at present recollect any exception to the normal number of ten rectrices in the *Trochilidæ*. But a careful examination will, we have little doubt, prove that the two medial rectrices, though abnormally diminutive, are not altogether wanting.

The other species described as new are *Empidonax bahamensis*, *Hirundo cyaneoviridis* (allied to Gosse's *H. euchrysea* of Jamaica), *Laniovireo crassirostris*, and *Mimus bahamensis* (probably the same as Cabanis's *M. gundlachii*). The accounts of the breeding of *Sula fiber* and *Phaëthon flavirostris* are of much interest.

X.—*Notices, Letters, Extracts from Correspondence, &c.*

It is with much regret that we commence our issue of the Second Volume of 'The Ibis' with the announcement of the death of one of the original promoters of our Journal, and a most valued contributor to its pages. Our friend and fellow-labourer John Wolley, having been in declining health for several months, died on the 20th of November last, at the early age of 36 years, leaving a vacancy in the number of the British Ornithologists' Union, which it will be very difficult to fill up. Of Mr. Wolley's career as a naturalist, and of his many brilliant discoveries and laborious explorations in various parts of the world in pursuit of his favourite science, we hope, with the kind assistance of a gentleman who is well acquainted with many of the events of his short though active life, to give some account in our next Number.

Mr. Blyth writes to us (from Calcutta, October 8th)—

“Among recent gatherings I have received *Palæornis erythro-*
genys, nobis (*P. nicobaricus*, Gould), from Port Blair (Andamans).
My name, however, will stand, as *erythro*genys of Lesson = *longi-*
cauda and *erythro*genys of Fraser, is subsequent, and, moreover,
in my opinion, refers to the genuine *P. barbatus*. Some time ago
a fellow sold me a wholly black *Sturnopastor*, which he falsely
stated was from Port Blair. The bird has now moulted into the
ordinary plumage of *Sturnopastor contra*. Varieties of this bird
are not very rare; and upon one of them Major Tytler founded
his *St. moorii*. I am rather pleased to hear that I have a living
specimen of my new *Kittacincla albiventris* now doing well at
Port Blair. Our taxidermist employed there wishes to bring it
with him himself when he returns, fearing to trust it to anybody
else. I have offered him a good price for as many as he can
procure for me alive, and am curious to hear the voice of this
species, the Shámá (*K. macroura*) being, as you know, the prince
of songsters in this part of the world. However, I have a Bhrim-
ráj (*Edolius paradiseus*) which imitates the Shámá's song to such
perfection that you cannot distinguish them apart. I formerly
had another of the same species that did the same; but there is
nothing that a good Bhrim-ráj will not imitate. I had one that
imitated the crow of a cock to perfection, and would set all the
cocks crowing within hearing, taking his turn with the rest most
laughably. Every sound a fowl, a cat, a goat, or sheep can
utter, the cry of a dog being whipped, the cawing of a crow,
the whistling of scraps of tunes, and the song of the best singing
birds, all these were repeated with marvellous accuracy by my
Bhrim-ráj. In addition to all this, it is one of the most intelli-
gent of birds (crow-like in this respect), and capable of strong
attachment.”

Besides a collection of birds, and valuable notes in this Num-
ber, several letters have been received from Mr. Salvin since our
last issue, from which we give the following extracts:—

“Dueñas, August 30th.—I have now before me four very
pretty skins of a Phalarope, which I shot upon the lake here a
few days ago. The Snipe has not yet arrived, nor have the

Ducks. Of Humming-birds I find 12 species here, but none, I fear, new. I cannot, however, complain of the ornithological productions of Dueñas, for I seldom go out with my gun without bringing back some addition to my collection. You would be astonished at the great variety of country concentrated within a narrow compass. The consequence of this is a very local distribution of species, and at the same time a great variety. Birds seem to assemble in the valleys and plains; and little is to be found either in the more dense forest or on the steep hill-sides. The Volcan de Fuego is one of my favourite resorts. Scarcely a week passes that I do not enjoy a ramble in its forests. The village of Dueñas is situated on the north side of a plain, which skirts the volcano on its eastern side. From it the volcano rises to a height of 10,000 feet, and to between 14,000 and 15,000 feet above the sea-level, the summit of it being divided into three peaks, from the most southern of which issues a constant column of smoke, which, though small, is always visible. Opposite to it is the Volcan de Agua, a very respectable hill with a single peak, which attains to nearly the same altitude as the Volcan de Fuego.

“I am adding greatly to my knowledge of the distribution of the birds of this country; and my theories as regards the inhabitants of the hot and cold regions frequently receive severe blows; in course of time I hope they will be replaced by others based on a surer footing. I find a Humming-bird common at Yzabal and Dueñas [probably *Amazilia arsinoë* is referred to (Ed.)]; another is common at Escuintla, on the Pacific coast and near the city of Guatemala. At the same time it appears that *Pyranga erythromelena*, *Chiroxiphia linearis*, and *Amazilia corallirostris* are all Pacific-coast species, and that none of them have as yet been met with in the Atlantic coast-region. *Cotinga amabilis* is, I strongly suspect, a bird of the high region. *Momotus lessoni* certainly is so, as also *Icterus giraudi*. So, you see, there is plenty to be done in the way of details, all of which require careful investigation.”

“Dueñas, October 25th.—Tomorrow I start for San Geronimo, Salamá, and Coban. I have long had this expedition in my mind; for I am particularly anxious to see and find out where

all the Vera Paz collections have been made, and I now go under very favourable circumstances. Three days hence will take me to the hacienda of San Geronimo, belonging to an English company, and where an English gentleman, whose acquaintance I made a short time ago, is staying. He is now going to Coban, and has asked me to join him.

“Among birds I have lately got several that have pleased me much. The Volcan de Fuego is a very fruitful locality, and I never go there without finding something fresh. I have shot this last month twenty-four species of *Mniotiltidæ*, not including some which I obtained last year. My Phalaropes are not *Phalaropus wilsoni*, as I thought at first; but Constancia has a skin of that species. There are therefore two Phalaropes which occur here.”

Mr. G. D. Rowley writes from Brighton, as follows:—

“For some time past I have been aware of the existence of two kinds of Ringed Plover at Shoreham Harbour in this vicinity—a larger and a smaller. This circumstance is so conspicuous as to have attracted the attention of fowlers and others shooting; for on the wing the difference is very observable. I have now a fine stuffed specimen of each kind before me, both killed in the last week but one in August, this year, at Shoreham. The larger is *Charadrius hiaticula*; the smaller is no doubt *Charadrius minor*, the Little Ringed Plover. Independently of the marked difference in size, the black beak, much more slender legs and thighs, and general appearance, there is the black spot on the inner web of the outer tail-feathers of my small specimen.

“I should be curious to know if this British and real Little Ringed Plover corresponds with the foreign skins usually sold as those of that bird; I fancy not. Our *Charadrius minor* (of Shoreham) arrives in May, when the young of the other species are running about; and, as I strongly suspect, sometimes breeds here. The bird is not by any means so uncommon as represented by Yarrell. Mr. Swaysland, of the Queen’s Road, always has some on hand. It again appears in autumn, after the spring migration.

“The migration of birds is a wonderful thing—wonderful even

to the closet naturalist, but still more so to the field observer, little understood by any. Living on the south coast in spring and autumn, I have good opportunities of marking the arrival and departure of some birds. I have seen the Swallows (*Hirundo*), over the sea, actually arrive and pass straight inland without a pause or the least show of weariness. Not so the Chiff-chaffs and Willow-Wrens, which stay about the shingle at first, till they recover their strength—at least, I have seen them at five o'clock of a spring morning within a few yards of the waves. In autumn, on certain days (varying according to the wind), the gardens about Brighton are full of Ring-Ouzels, Chiff-chaffs, Willow-Wrens, Redstarts; on the Downs are Wheatears; in the air Goldfinches, Swallows, Green Linnets, &c. I have stood and watched these birds early on a fine morning (for birds of the above kinds do not fly in cloudy, dull days), going in continuous streams down to the sea, following one another as surely in the same direction as if going by a mariner's compass. The Roman augurs were not quite so absurd perhaps as one would at first imagine; a great many indications may be gathered from the flight of birds. Their motions appear to the common observer to be guided by chance; but the ornithologist knows that each bird he sees is employed on some particular business, and can interpret its actions. Birds always travel by night across the sea, working their way along the coast till a proper wind is blowing, and flying against any light which may appear on the shore. In the days of the old watchmen at Brighton, small birds used frequently to fly against the lanterns which they carried."

Herr August von Pelzeln, of Vienna, informs us that, among the collections formed during the late exploring expedition of the 'Novara,' which have recently arrived at the capital, are "large numbers of bird-skins. Among these are an interesting and tolerably numerous series from the Nicobar Islands, some rare birds from the smaller Pacific Islands, and many from India and the Sunda Islands. Among the latter is a species of Bonaparte's genus *Diardigallus*. The collection of skeletons and birds in spirits is of great value; and there are also a considerable number of nests and eggs."

Mr. W. Llewellyn, of Penllegare, writes that he shot a specimen of *Aëdon galactodes* (the Rufous Sedge Warbler of Yarrell's Second Supplement) at Start Point, in Devonshire, in the month of September last. A very strong south wind had prevailed for nearly a week previously. The bird was not observed until it was shot, at which moment it was flying over a stone wall, within a hundred yards of the sea. It was excessively thin, and had lost its tail. The specimen was sent to the British Museum, where it is now preserved.

We find that the occurrence of this example has already been noticed in the 'Annals and Magazine of Natural History' for November last (ser. 3, vol. iv. p. 399).

To the Editor of 'The Ibis.'

Jardine Hall, Dec. 13, 1859.

MY DEAR SIR,—Having noticed your observations ('Ibis,' i. p. 322) upon the *Euphonia cyanodorsalis* of Dubois, I have examined the specimen, alluded to as in my collection, procured by Mr. Skinner. It agrees exactly with your description of *E. occipitalis* ♀ (Proc. Zool. Soc. 1856, p. 270), and also with the figure in DuBus's *Esquisses Ornithologiques*. On comparing my specimen with the figure of *E. cyanodorsalis* in the 'Rev. Zoologique,' the position of the blue spot upon the head answers to the term '*occipitalis*,' the front of the spot being in a line with the posterior angle of the eye. In Dubois' figure the spot is placed on the centre of the crown. Skinner's bird appears to be correct as you have named it; and its range will extend from Guatemala to Mexico, as Dubois mentions having also received specimens of it from that country.

Believe me sincerely yours,

WM. JARDINE.

In reply to a question about the specific validity of *Ictinia mississippiensis*—a bird wanting in the very full series of *Accipitres* belonging to the Norwich Museum—Mr. John Cassin, of Philadelphia, writes as follows:—" *Ictinia mississippiensis* is certainly different from *I. plumbea*, though like that species. It is

larger and more lightly coloured, and always has the secondaries widely tipped with very pale ashy, nearly white. The adult has the tail black, without any trace of white bars. *I. plumbea* has always (I believe) transverse white bars on the tail, and the tips of the secondaries not marked as in *I. mississippiensis*, but uniform. It is also smaller; and specimens are generally much more darkly coloured than in *I. mississippiensis*, especially on the under parts, though I have seen one or two that were nearly as light, and had the head nearly as pale. There are transverse bars on the tail in all specimens I have seen of *I. plumbea*. There are six specimens of *I. mississippiensis* in the Academy's collection, including Alexander Wilson's original. Three of these (♂ ♀ et juv.) are from New Mexico, obtained by Dr. Woodhouse, and two are without labels. Four examples of *I. plumbea* are all from South America."

It is curious that all Mexican *Ictinia* which we have seen (collected by Sallé, Boucard, &c.) have belonged to the *I. plumbea*, of which there is also a specimen in the British Museum, said to be from North America. Of *I. mississippiensis* there is one specimen in the same collection, agreeing with Mr. Cassin's differential characters.

We hear of several important additions to Ornithological literature in progress at the present moment. M. O. DesMurs is engaged on a 'Traité d'Oologie,' being a general work on that interesting subject. Dr. Hartlaub, of Bremen, is occupied on a Synopsis of the Ornithology of Madagascar, in extension of his 'Gegenwärtiger Standpunkt der Ornithologie Madagascars,' published in D'Alton and Burmeister's 'Zeitung für Zoologie, Zootomie, und Palæozoologie' in 1848, and has met with several rich sources of new materials. Professor Schlegel, of Leyden, has just completed a review of the genus *Corvus*, with figures, for the Society 'Natura artis Magistra' of Amsterdam; and Sir William Jardine and Mrs. Hugh Strickland are preparing for publication a further portion of the late lamented Mr. H. E. Strickland's Ornithological Synonyms.